

The Safe Haven Law:

- Allows a distressed parent to surrender an unwanted infant safely, legally and confidentially
- Provides the newborn access to needed medical care
- Enables the parents to avoid arrest or prosecution for abandonment
- Requires no names or records
- Permits babies less than 72 hours old to be surrendered to staff at any hospital emergency room or designated County site
- Makes medical treatment available to the birth mother
- Puts the child into the custody of the Department of Children and Family Services which places the infant in a foster or pre-adoptive home

Teen Parents

- **Want to protect your newborn baby?**
- **Feel alone?**
- **Don't know what to do?**
- **Need help?**
- **Need someone to call for advice?**

then contact

**Safe Haven Hotline
1-877-725-5111**

24 Hours Per Day/Toll Free



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Safe Haven Law



**Important Information
for Teen Parents**

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Certainly we would prefer that teen parents reach out to us while they are pregnant, not after giving birth, so we can provide proper medical care and counseling. At the same time, we want to assure parents who choose not to keep their child that they have options. Teen parents can deliver their babies to safe hands in a hospital emergency room or to designated sites such as a County fire station without fear of legal repercussion.



What is Safe Haven?

It's a new law: the NEWBORN ABANDONMENT LAW (SB 1368, Brulte, R-Cucamonga), also known as the Safe Haven Law. Under this law a person may surrender an unwanted infant confidentially. As long as the baby has not been abused, the person may do so **without fear of arrest or prosecution.**

How does it work?

A distressed parent who is unable or unwilling to care for an infant can give up custody of a baby who is less than 72 hours old, safely, legally, and confidentially. All that is required is that the baby be turned over to an employee of County of Los Angeles designated Safe Haven sites, which currently include hospital emergency rooms and county Fire Department fire stations. As long as the child shows no signs of intentional abuse, the person surrendering the infant is **not required to reveal his or her identity.**

Can only a parent bring in the baby?

No, a parent or other person having legal custody may bring in the infant.

Is there help for a parent who decides to bring the baby to a Safe Haven location?

Yes, the parent can call the Safe Haven Hotline, toll free, at 1-877-725-5111 and get the address for any Safe Haven site. The Hotline is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and is staffed by some 40 professionals who speak more than 160 languages. When parents call the Hotline, they can get information on the Safe Haven Law and the closest designated site. The Hotline also provides referrals for social services, including adoption services, family planning, and medical care.

Does a parent have to call before bringing in the baby?

No, a parent can walk in anytime. However, a parent may only surrender an infant at a fire station if the fire station has staff available to receive the infant. Otherwise, the parent is encouraged to surrender an infant at the nearest hospital emergency room.

Does a parent have to tell anything to the people accepting the baby at the Safe Haven site?

No, nothing is required. However the parent will be asked to complete a medical questionnaire because the information provided could be very useful for caring for the child. No identifying information of the child or parent is required.

What will happen to your baby?

The child will be examined and given medical treatment, if needed. Then the Department of Children and Family Services will take custody and place the child in a foster or pre-adoptive home.



What happens if a parent wants the infant back?

If the parent wants the infant back, he or she must call the County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services at 1-800-540-4000 within 14 days of surrendering the infant. While it may be possible to reclaim the child after 14 days, it becomes more difficult.

What happens to the mother?

If the mother brings in the baby, she will be offered medical treatment if needed. The mother can, of course, refuse treatment if she wishes. Once she has safely turned over the baby to a staff person, she is free to go.

Why is Los Angeles doing this?

The purpose of Safe Haven is to protect unwanted babies from being hurt or dying because they were abandoned. You may have heard tragic stories of babies left in dumpsters or public toilets. The parents who committed these acts may have been under severe emotional distress. The mothers may have hidden their pregnancies, fearful of what would happen if their families found out. Because they were afraid and had nowhere to turn, they abandoned their babies.

Abandoning a baby puts the child in extreme danger. Too often, it results in the child's death. It is also illegal, with severe consequences. But with Safe Haven, this tragedy does not ever have to happen in Los Angeles again!

